

Department of Social and Health Services  
Community Services Division  
**Social Services Manual**

Revision: # 163  
Category: **Mental Status Exam Guidelines**  
Issued: July 2, 2020  
Revision Author: Nicholas Swiatkowski  
Division CSD  
Mail Stop 45440  
Phone 360-725-4638  
Email [nicholas.swiatkowski@dshs.wa.gov](mailto:nicholas.swiatkowski@dshs.wa.gov)

**Summary**

Removed this page. MSE guidelines are outlined in the CSD Mental Incapacity Evaluation (MIE) contract.

\*\*\*\*\*

**~~Mental Status Exam Guidelines~~**

**~~Revised December 12, 2011~~**

~~A mental status exam (MSE) must accompany all mental health reports for determination of Disability based benefits. A MSE must be included with the submission of DSHS form 13-865.~~

~~A mini mental status exam (MMSE) cannot be substituted for a MSE.~~

**~~MSE GUIDELINES~~**

~~Every MSE must include observation detail for each of the categories listed below. Individual questions may be altered and additional questions may be added:~~

<del>-</del>	<del>Examples of observation detail:</del>
<del>General Appearance</del>	<del><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Well groomed or unkempt?</li><li>What is the person wearing?</li><li>Are clothes appropriate for weather and situation?</li></ul></del>

-	<b>Examples of observation detail:</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence of psychomotor agitation or retardation? Give examples.</li> </ul>
<b>Attitude and Behavior</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the person cooperative, irritable, belligerent etc.?</li> <li>• Is there any indication of malingering or factitious behavior? Explain.</li> </ul>
<b>Mood and Affect</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How does the person describe his or her mood?</li> <li>• Is the person's affect congruent with the stated mood? Explain.</li> </ul>
<b>Content of Thought</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are there any delusions?</li> <li>• Is the person suicidal? Homicidal? What leads you to this conclusion?</li> </ul>
<b>Stream of Mental Activity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is speech normal or tangential or circumstantial? Give Examples.</li> </ul>
<b>Orientation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the person oriented times three?</li> </ul>
<b>Memory</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remote—can person remember past events?</li> <li>• Recent—can person remember 3/3 objects after 5 min?</li> <li>• Immediate—how well can the person do digit span back and forward?</li> </ul>
<b>Fund of Knowledge</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the person aware of current events? Give examples.</li> <li>• Does the person know the names of the president and governor?</li> <li>• Can the person answer simple geography questions, such as naming bordering states?</li> </ul>
<b>Concentration</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Serial 7's or 3's? Give person's response.</li> <li>• Spell WORLD forward and backward?</li> <li>• Follow a three step command?</li> <li>• Difficulty following conversation. Give examples.</li> </ul>

-	<b><del>Examples of observation detail:</del></b>
<b><del>Abstract Thinking</del></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><del>• Interpret proverbs? Give examples.</del></li></ul>
<b><del>Insight and Judgment</del></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><del>• Does the person have insight into his/her condition?</del></li><li><del>• Does the person show good judgment when asked what he/she would do if smelling smoke in crowded theater?</del></li></ul>